

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Amilsa, I am a resident of New Haven, an immigrant with five minor children, and three of them are citizens. I would like to share with you my testimony on how hard it has been for me as a mother with children that are covered with Husky insurance vs my children that are not because of their Legal status.

I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am originally from Guatemala; I came to the United States 13 years ago with my two kids to join my husband that came to the USA six years before we did, with the promise of providing a better life here for our family. He worked and did just that; provided for our family. However, I always noticed that the health insurance in this country was so expensive, especially for a low-income family of four with no legal status.

Later on, we expanded our family with three more kids. They were citizens and qualified for State health insurance under Husky. Of course, I felt a relief that they qualified for health insurance from the state in a time when we couldn't afford medical insurance for our family, but I never imagine the pain that we would feel as parents to see that only three of our children were getting the medical attention and services they needed and the other two were not because we could afford to pay for it. We are here, present in the United States, and it's not our children's fault to suffer if we cannot at the moment pay for health insurance, either because we lost our job or ours were reduced, it's not human for my minor child to get punished for that and not get treated like their siblings because of their legal status.

I feel useless that I cannot do anything to demand the same treatment for the same conditions that they may have, doctors, telling me that there is nothing they could do because they are limited on what test to provide because of the lack of insurance. I honestly feel like the doctors and health providers discriminate against us. As soon as I take my undocumented child to the doctor because he is sick, I see that they don't really run tests and right away tell me that there is nothing wrong when I know that there is because of the symptoms my child experiences at home. But I feel like that is ignored because the child is not insured and they don't provide the same treatment as they would to a child that has medical insurance.

It's not until this bill is passed that all of my children can have quality medical services provided for them. It's hard for a child to understand why one would get medicine and the other would not because it is not covered. "Why does my mother take my sibling to the doctor without thinking about it, but for me she does." I have been in positions where I have to cure my own child with herbs and house remedies because we know we are not going to afford any medication that the doctor prescribes. But if it's my minor child with Husky I could take him because Husky will cover the medication. And there could be as many Community Health Clinics, but at the end of the day, they are limited on the health services they can provide to my undocumented child.